

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 08499 202300Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 200945Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7581

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 8499

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS JUSMAG-K; SECDEF WASHDC AND CNO WASHDC FOR (OP-63)

JOINT EMBASSY /COMUSK MESSAGE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS KS

SUBJECT: HARPOON/EXOCET MISSILES FOR ROKN

REF: A STATE 277532; B CNO WASHDC 192026Z DEC 74

1. BOTH EMBASSY AND JUSMAG-K HAVE PURSUED EXOCET ISSUE CONSTANTLY WITH MND AND PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, AS WELL AS WITH MOFA (YI, SANG OCK). CHIEF, JUSMAG-K HAS MADE EXPLICITLY CLEAR TO MND OUR OPPOSITION TO POSSIBLE PURCHASE OF THIRD COUNTRY EXOCET MISSILES.

2. INITIALLY, THE PROBLEM HINGED ON EXOCET VERSUS HARPOON, THEN IT SHIFTED TO EXOCET VERSUS STANDARD ARM, AND HAS NOW SHIFTED TO "TIME GAP" FROM FINAL STANDARD ARM SYSTEM INSTALLATION UNTIL FIRST HARPOON SYSTEM WILL BE DELIVERED WHICH PROMPTED A CONSIDERATION OF PLACING EXOCET ON 2 DD AND 1 PK. ROK NAVY HAS CONSISTENTLY SUPPORTED HARPOON IN PREFERENCE TO ANY OTHER AND IS NOT BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THIS LATEST ISSUE. MND APPARENTLY AGREES WITH ROK NAVY BUT HAS NOT BEEN AUTHORIZED TO INFORM US.

3. WE BELIEVE SUBJECT ARGUMENT IS SPECIOUS AND IS
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PAGE 02 SEOUL 08499 202300Z

ENGENDERED FROM PRESSURES ABOVE MND (I.E. PRIMIN'S

OFFICE). THE EFFACY OF INSTALLING EXOCET ON TWO 30-YR OLD EX-US DESTROYERS OR A PK OF 80 TONS IS HIGHLY SUSPECT, HAS NEVER BEEN DISCUSSED PREVIOUSLY, NOR GENERATED AS A REQUIREMENT FOR JOINT" US/ROK CONSIDERATION. THEREFORE, WE CONCLUDE THAT THE EXOCET NEITHER FILLS THEIR CITED NEED, NOR MEETS A RECOGNIZED NEED.

4. EVEN THOUGH THE ROKG DOES NOT PRESENTLY HAVE A LETTER OF OFFER FROM FRENCH ON THE PURCHASE OF EXOCET, THE REPORTED LEADTIME OF 24 MONTHS FOR THE FIRE CONTROL SYSTEM (VEGA), WHICH IS REQUIRED TO COMPLETE THAT MISSILE SYSTEM, MAY ATTENUATE THE ARGUMENT OVER THE "TIME GAP."

5. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE LETTER OF OFFER DATA OUTLINED IN REF B MAY KEEP THE EXOCET ISSUE ALIVE SINCE THE INDICATED DELIVERY OF THE FIRST HARPOON SYSTEM IS THIRD QTR CALENDER YEAR 1977, WHICH DELIVERY WILL NOT SATISFY THE EXPECTED DELIVERY OF THE SECOND GENERATION PSMM, I.E. OCTOBER 1976.

6. WE INTEND TO REMAIN FIRM ON OPPOSITION TO ANY PURCHASE OF EXOCET, WHILE RECOGNIZING POLITICAL PRESSURES ON THIS ISSEU. HOWEVER, WE COULD GAIN MUCH STRONGER MND SUPPORT FOR OPPOSING EXOCET IF WE COULD MOVE UP THE HARPOON DELIVERY SCHEDULE; SPECIFICALLY BY PROVIDING AT LEAST TWO SYSTEMS AND TWENTY MISSILES IN OCTOBER 76. WHICH COINCIDES WITH COMPLETION OF THE FIRST TWO OF THE SECOND GENERATION PSMMS (TO BE BUILD IN US); AND THREE SYSTEMS AND THIRTY MISSILES IN JAN-MAR 1977 TIME FRAME WHICH WOULD COINCIDE WITH THE LAST THREE (TO BE BUILT IN ROK) OF THE SECOND GENERATION PSMM PROGRAM. SNEIDER

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDEES.

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